So far an amount of Rs. 1024.38 lakhs has been released to 11 States for establishment of 1876 Grain Banks to benefit 188851 families.

As per the scheme the member families of the Grain Bank are entitled to take loans of food grains in four instalments upto 25 kg each during the rainy season or in any other period of scarcity. The loan is required to be returned with interest in cash or kind at the time of the next harvest season. Thus the present scheme provide for food security to the poor tribal villagers, within the village itself.

Comprehensive Policy for mentally challenged persons

*410. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mentally challenged persons are increasing in the country;

(b) if so, the details of such persons, State-wise;

(c) whether Government propose to make a comprehensive mental health policy in order to take care of these persons; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (d) The number of mentally challenged persons (which includes those suffering from mental illness and those with mental retardation) is increasing due to changes in demographics such as increase in population and over all increase in the rate of depression world-wide.

The State-wise data on persons suffering from mental disorders is not available. Epidemiological studies have revealed that 1 to 2% of the population has major mental disorders and 5 to 10% suffer from minor mental disorders.

The Government had launched the National Mental Health Programme in 1982 and has initiated a pilot programme called the District Mental Health Programme in 1996-97 for providing care for persons with mental disorders in selected districts in the country. The District Mental Health Programme is presently being implemented in

29 districts covering 22 States and Union Territories. Its aim is to identify persons suffering from various mental disorders and epilepsy and manage them at the primary health care center and district level by trained doctors and with the active support of the families and the community in which the patient lives.

Financial assistance to Government hospitals

†*411. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the financial assistance provided by Government during the year 2000-2001 under the scheme to the selected Government hospitals in various States for emergency nursing centres in the towns/cities located at the National Highways;

(b) the details thereof; State-wise; and

(c) the names of the areas in Gujarat where the benefits of this scheme have been extended?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) and (b) Financial assistance has been provided to the following States/Union Territories during the year 2000-2001 under the Pilot Project for upgradation and strengthening of Emergency facilities of State Hospitals of towns/cities located on National Highways:

1. Rs. 70.00 lakhs to Government of Tripura for upgradation and strengthening of emergency facilities of Tripura Sundari Hospital (South District), Udaipur (Tripura).
2. Rs. 70.00 lakhs to Government of Sikkim for upgradation and strengthening of Emergency Care Unit at S.T.N.M. Hospital Gangtok.
3. Rs. 59.00 lakhs to Government of Arunachal Pradesh for

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.